

8821. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I just want to ask this question : I want to know whether you are aware that the Sub-Committee, after having finished its work in Poona, came back to Bombay and reported what it had done to the main conference of the Hindus which had appointed the Sub-Committee ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes ; it must have done.

8822. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I will put the question to Mr. Gavai, who I think was there. Mr. Gavai, you took part in the negotiations which resulted in the Poona Pact ?

Mr. Gavai : Yes.

8823. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I am not putting it in an offensive manner, but you at that time belonged to what is called the Raja-Moonje Pact Party ?

Mr. Gavai : Yes.

8824. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You were present in Poona ?

Mr. Gavai : I was.

8825. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : When the Pact was signed, the Sub-Committee came back to Bombay and held a meeting under the presidency of Pandit Malviya and resolution was passed by the whole of that Committee, approving of the Poona Pact ?

Mr. Gavai : Yes,

Dr. Moonje : On these points that Dr. Ambedkar has asked me, may I not explain ?

Chairman : I think the Committee would prefer to hear the conclusion of Dr. Ambedkar's examination. We will hear your explanation afterwards, Dr. Moonje.

8826. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : After the Sub-Committee was appointed and it went to Poona to discuss this matter with Mahatma Gandhi, there was a Session of the Hindu Mahasabha held at Delhi between 24th and 26th September, 1932?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8827. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Under the presidency of Pandit Malviya ?

Dr. Moonje : No. Under the presidency of Mr. N. C. Kelkar.

8828. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee was present at the meeting in Delhi ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8829. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Raja Narendranath was also present at this meeting of the Hindu Mahasabha in Delhi ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8830. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Is it not a fact that this Pact was ratified by the Hindu Mahasabha at the Delhi Session ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes ; there is no question about that.

8831. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee is the leading member of the caste-Hindus of Bengal ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8832. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : And also a very prominent member of the Hindu Mahasabha ?

Dr. Moonie : Yes.

Mr. J. Bannerjee : May I explain that he is not a caste-Hindu at all ; he is a non-caste-Hindu ; he is a Brahmo.

8833. *Marquess of Zetland* : I saw there was a misprint in the evidence before ; it is a very natural mistake. Sir Rabindranath Tagore was described as a “Brahmo” which is a very different thing from a caste-Hindu. In the evidence the word “Brahmo” became “Brahmin”, which is one of the highest castes of Hindus there is. The same thing applies to Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee ; he is a Brahmo, not a Brahmin. Is that not so ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Yes.

8834. *Mr. Zafulla Khan* : We on this side, who really do not know the details of this wish to understand it. Is it Brahmin or non-Brahmin, a question of birth, a question who is born a Brahmin ? Dr. Moonje is a Brahmin by caste, although he might give us his convictions so far as caste is concerned ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : If he adopts a different religion, he ceases to be a Hindu.

8835. *Mr. M. R. Jaykar* : May I ask a question on this point ? You do not mean to suggest that because a man is a Brahmo, he ceases to be Hindu ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : He certainly ceases to be a Hindu by religion ; he is a non-Hindu. When he marries he has to describe himself as a non-Hindu.

8836. *Mr. M. R. Jaykar* : I am not speaking of the matter in connection with the law of marriage or anything of that kind, but do you say, as a Hindu, that if a Brahmin becomes a Brahmo in religion he ceases to be a Hindu or a Brahmin ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : He ceases to be a Brahmin, certainly.

8837. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Dr. Moonje, apart from the question of whether Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee is a Brahmo or Hindu, he has been taking a very active part in the movement of the Hindu Mahasabha ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8838. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : He has been protagonist of the Hindu interest ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8839. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Raja Narendranath comes from the Punjab ?

Dr. Moonje : Yes.

8840. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : He is the President of the local Hindu Mahasabha ?

Dr. Moonje : He is President of the Hindu Mahasabha too. May I explain, my Lord Chairman ?

8841. *Chairman* : If you please ?

Dr. Moonje : I was called to the meeting in Bombay by Pandit

Malviya when the meeting took place and when the discussions were going on. I got up, Dr. Ambedkar will remember, and I said that when Mahatma Gandhi was not prepared even to grant reservation of seats to the Depressed Classes in joint electorates, it is not possible to any compromise on this question, in order that he may give up his fast. However, to our great relief, on the second day news came that Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to recognise the reservation of seats in joint electorates. I was greatly pleased. Then at a certain meeting, where the principle of the Poona Pact was being evolved. I distinctly told at that time Pandit Malviya that this principle of the Poona Pact which is being evolved is based upon separate electorates. I personally, and the Hindu Mahasabha as a body, have a fundamental objection to separate electorates, and I personally and the Hindu Mahasabha as a body will not accept this principle of the Poona Pact. Then of course I could not go to Poona, along with the other members, for carrying on the negotiations. Then, to my satisfaction, having come to know that Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to accept the reservation of seats, I said "The danger of Gandhi's life is over," and therefore I went to Delhi. In Delhi, when the session of the Hindu Mahasabha was in progress, we received the wire that Gandhi had accepted the Poona Pact and, naturally, everybody was anxious to save the life of Gandhi; and we passed a resolution in the Hindu Mahasabha—

8842. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Accepting the Pact ?

Dr. Moonje: Yes, accepting the Pact. But it must be understood here that on the spot, Raja Narendranath on behalf of the Punjab protested and protested in vain, but of course the majority of the whole House was at that time in fear and dread—

8843. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan*: Under the shadow of the fast ?

Dr. Moonje: That if the Pact was not accepted, Mahatma Gandhi's life would not be saved, and therefore they accepted the Pact. Those are all the details. One particular point is this : in our negotiations with Dr. Ambedkar during the First and Second Round Table Conferences, Dr. Ambedkar has agreed, I made an agreement with the Hindu Mahasabha that he was fully satisfied if, under a system of joint electorates, reservation of seats on the population basis would be granted to him. On one occasion, during the Second R.T.C. when Dr. Ambedkar thought that there was some ambiguity in this point. I suggested to him that a joint letter should be sent to the Prime Minister, signed by himself and myself, saying that the difference between the Depressed Classes and the Hindus were settled by this arrangement; that is, reservation of seats on the population basis in joint electorates with the Hindus.

8844. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: To which I did not agree ?

Dr. Moonje: To which, at that time, Dr. Ambedkar did not agree ; but at the First Round Table Conference, Dr. Ambedkar did agree and, by his consent, the fact was announced to the American newspapers.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not accept that.

8845. *Mr. M. R. Jayakar:* May I ask a question, Dr. Moonje? You were speaking about the Hindu Mahasabha accepting the Poona Pact at Delhi?

Dr. Moonje: Yes.

8346. *Mr. M. R. Jayakar:* Do you mean to say that the Hindu Mahasabha accepted the Poona Pact, not on its merits, but because of the satisfaction that Mahatma Gandhi's life was saved?

Dr. Moonje: I have already said that when the Pact was being evolved I distinctly said that the principle under which the Pact was being evolved could be acceptable to me personally or to the Hindu Mahasabha as a whole because it was based on separate electorates.

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: May I add one word? The Punjab Hindus have a similar feeling towards the Poona Pact as the Hindus of the Bengal. Raja Narendranath was opposed to it on the very day when the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution accepting it in a hurry. Within 48 hours of the acceptance of the Poona Pact at Bombay there was a Hindu protest in the open meeting. The Secretary of the Punjab Hindus also made a protest, and Dr. Gokalchand sent a Cablegram to the Premier here that the Punjab Hindus were opposed to it. The Hindu feeling is still opposed to it. There are articles in the newspapers, which I have not with me, that the Poona Pact has affected the Hindus of the Punjab very badly. Then one thing more, and that is that certain Scheduled Tribes of the Depressed Classes, who regard themselves recorded in the Census Report as Hindus, as Butwalas, Barawalas, Kabir-panthas and Domes have not been included among the Scheduled Tribes of the Depressed Classes. They are carrying on agitation on that behalf; the names of these Tribes are Butwalas, Barawalas, Kabirpanthas and Domes. They amount to about 50,000 population in the Punjab because they got themselves recorded in the Census Report as Oriyas. They are not mentioned in the Scheduled Tribes; and they are creating this agitation in order to be included among them. So that shows a sort of prejudice against those Tribes of the so-called Depressed Classes amongst all those who describe themselves as Hindus. Therefore, my request to the Joint Select Committee is to look into this matter, and at least give them a right in the new tribes.

8847. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan:* His last point is not clear. These particular tribes whom you have mentioned want to be scheduled?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: Yes.

8848. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan:* And they have not been scheduled?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: This is another aspect—

8849. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan:* I want to clear the point up. Not exactly depressed as those who have been put in scheduled?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: My point is this, that simply because they have described themselves as Hindus in Scheduled Caste, they have been excluded from this right which has been given to the other tribes.

8850. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan*: The right to be scheduled ?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: Yes.

Dr. Moonje: May I explain this point ?

As regards the Punjab and as regards Bengal the objection of the Hindu Mahasabha is that after careful examination, both by the people and the Lothian Committee, it was found that the question of depressed classes does not exist in Punjab, and the question of depressed classes in Bengal is not so insistent or is not so keen as to require any very great consideration.

It was this point which has been made a grievance, and my friend, Mr. Parmanand, says that these people are complaining that they are not included in the depressed classes because they have been made Arya Samajis. The point is that if the depressed class question in Punjab is to be created as a vested interest in separate electorates, then these depressed classes have a right to be included, which are now being scheduled as depressed classes. If that vested interest is not to be created then those people have no claim to be included in those depressed classes.

8851. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: Might I ask one question : You object to the Poona Pact being applied to Punjab because, in your opinion, there are no depressed classes there ?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: Not in the sense in which there are in most of other Provinces.

8852. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: In some sense, are there or are there not ? Are there depressed classes in the Punjab or are there not ?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: They are not Untouchables, they are not Unapproachables. No distinction is kept, and it is in the Report of the Simon Commission and the Government of India Report also that the distinction between caste-Hindus and the depressed classes does not exist in the Punjab.

8853. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: Might I ask you this question? How do you reconcile yourself : Your first position is that there are no depressed classes and therefore, there is no provision for them, and your second complaint is that certain depressed classes are not included in the scheduled list?

Pandit Nanak Chand: I have dealt with this point, and I will give you an explanation. As far as unapproachability and untouchability is concerned, it does not exist, or if it exists, it is almost negligible ; there is very little. This is admitted by the Government officials, by the Sikhs, by the Mahommedans and by the Hindus, but certain classes have been scheduled as depressed classes and certain others of equal status, whether economically backward or otherwise, deprived of certain rights, namely, of purchasing land, and so forth, want to be scheduled along with those others because they are on the same social status.

8854. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: You are very anxious that they should be included ?

Pandit Nanak Chand: I am not anxious ; they are anxious. I do not want anybody to be called a Depressed Class.

8855. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I want to ask a few questions of Mr. Chatterjee of Bengal. I think your main complaint is that the Bengal Hindus were not represented when this Poona Pact was evolved—is that it ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: That is one of the complaints. My main complaint is —

8856. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I will take this for the moment because I want to exhaust one at a time. I think it was admitted by your colleague that there were members of the Bengal caste-Hindus present both in Bombay and Poona ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Yes.

Mr. J. Bannerjee: At Poona one caste-Hindu was present : that is what I have said.

8857. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: Were not there dozens from other Provinces ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: That may be.

Marquess of Zetland: Dr. Ambedkar, could not we solve the whole of this problem if you told us the names of the Bengal caste-Hindus who were there?

8858. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I am giving the names. These names were given in the course of the discussion that took place in the Bengal Legislative Council on the 14th March 1933.

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Will you kindly give the names ?

8859. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: There was no contradiction at all on that point ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I was in England at the time.

8860. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I am quoting from speech of Mr. Mullick who represented the depressed classes in the Bengal Legislative Council. This is what he says ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: He is a nominated member not an elected representative : I want to make that point clear.

8861. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: He is a representative of the depressed classes ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: And he has been defeated in a constituency before—twice before.

8862. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: What difference does that make to the point I am dealing with ? I am on the point whether certain Bengal Hindus were present or not. This was a statement made in the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council in the course of a speech by a Bengal Depressed Class Member who advocated the Poona Pact : “We know that they were men like Swami Satyananda of the Hindu Mission. Babu Haridas Mazumdar,

M.A., B.L. of the Amrita Samaj, Babu Pramathanath Banerjee, M.L.C., of Midnapore, Babu S. C. Das Gupta of the Khadi Pratisthan, besides men like Pandit Malaviya, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, Mr. Rajgopalachari ?”

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Excepting one, none of them was present at Poona.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That was a statement in the Council.

8863. *Mr. J. Bannerjee:* Will you permit me to go on ?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Please answer when I ask a question.

Mr. J. Bannerjee: It is an incorrect statement.

8864. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I say this statement has not been contradicted by anyone in the Bengal Legislative Council ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: I was present on that day. No speech was delivered, but something was read from paper, and it is quite possible that people missed those bits. A paper was read indistinctly.

8865. *Mr. M. R. Jayakar:* The proceedings of your Council are published, are they not ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Yes.

8866. *Mr. M. R. Jayakar:* Since the publication of those proceedings has there been any contradiction ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Yes ; immediately after the debate was held, as soon as we heard that certain names were given out, a contradiction was made in the newspapers.

8867. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I put it to you that not only were these men present at Bombay ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: I am speaking of Poona.

8868. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I am talking first of all about Bombay. Not only were these men present at Bombay when the sub-committee was appointed, but they had conversations with me individually in my office and urged me to come to a settlement. This is a fact which I disclosed in an interview which I gave to the Bombay Times and which is published on the 17th March, soon after your legislative proceedings were announced ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: The very next day I contradicted your statement and said that did not touch the point because three of those members had not, according to your own admission, gone to Poona, and were not present at the time of the Pact.

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I just want to say this, that it is nobody's case and I do not think it is Dr. Ambedkar's case—that these gentlemen were sent to Bombay, or a solitary gentleman who was present at Poona was sent there by the Bengali Hindus or anybody of Bengali Hindus ; they may have been there accidentally or may have been there because they wanted to see the Mahatma who was ill. Some actually went there for the glory of carrying his dead body in a procession.

8869. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I will put it to you that if that is the case that it was well known that, these men had left Calcutta for the

express purpose of attending the Malaviya Conference. That has been published in the "Liberty" ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : They did not go there on authorisation by any public body in Bengal. They may have gone there on their own business or for some other reason. May I make an offer to Dr. Ambedkar; may T just say this ? We, in Bengal, feel it a great slur that there should be a suggestion that there are depressed classes in Bengal. The Bengali Hindus have been going on doing social work for over a century now in order to remove caste barriers and things like that. I ask Dr. Ambedkar to agree with this. The Lothian Committee very fairly formulated two characteristics, two criteria, for determining who are depressed classes, untouchability, unapproachability within a certain distance. I suggest that the Bengal Government should make an enquiry into who are untouchables and unapproachables, and if their number is ascertained we should be willing to give these people their proportion of representation on the Bengal Legislative Council on the basis of joint electorates.

8870. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :* I am not discussing joint electorates ; I am discussing this important point of fact when it was well known that certain Bengal caste-Hindus were going to Bombay to attend Malaviya Conference. I am quoting to you from the "Liberty" of the 17th September, 1932: it is a paper which is published in Calcutta. I find in column 4 on page 5 of the "Liberty" of that date this report written in broad headlines : "Swami Satyananda and others leave for Bombay. Swami Satyananda, Sjs. Haridas Majumdar and Jajneshwar Mandal of the Amrita Samaj are leaving for Bombay tonight to attend the Malaviya Conference." They were not going on any of their private business ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee : As far as I am concerned I have never heard of the gentlemen ; this is the first time I have heard of them ; certainly they have been hiding their light under a bushel as far as Bengal is concerned, and these gentlemen must themselves have sent the report just to advertise that they were going.

8871. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :* My point is that the public of Bengal was aware that certain members from the caste-Hindus were proceeding from Bengal to attend the Malaviya Conference, and if the public of Bengal thought that they were not representatives it was quite possible for them to send a message to Malaviya not to trust these people ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee : I submit it is most unfair to the public of Bengal to hold them to a paragraph that appeared casually in some column of the "Liberty".

8872. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar :* I am only stating it as a fact that every body in Bengal ought to know ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee : Nobody reads the paper thorough like that. Nobody searches out particular columns to find out things like that. It never came to our notice.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I will not press you further on that.

8873. *Sir Austen Chamberlain:* Does Mr. Chatterjee mean he was unaware that such a meeting was being held in Bombay?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: We were aware that a meeting was being held, but we were completely unaware that anybody was taking it upon himself to go from Bengal to that meeting.

8874. *Sir Austen Chamberlain:* If you had these strong feelings on the subject and you were, in your opinion, the most representative body who could speak on behalf of those who held your views, why did not you send representatives when you became aware of the meeting?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: We did not know what was happening there. We in Calcutta, honestly did not know what was happening there excepting that we heard the news of Mr. Gandhi's going to fast.

Mr. J. Bannerjee: We did not attach any great importance to it. The Malaviya Conference was not to dispose of the fate of the caste-Hindus of Bengal; therefore, nobody went there in any capacity whatever. The Poona Meeting was really important.

8875. *Sir Austen Chamberlain:* You were aware of the meeting, but you did not think it worth attending. That is the position?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: I am afraid you are confusing the two meetings at Bombay and Poona. The Pact was signed at Poona and that was the important meeting to which the caste-Hindus were not invited. The meeting at Bombay was a sort of preliminary canter. We were justified in not attaching much importance to it.

8876. *Mr. Zafrulla Khan:* May I put this to you : I do not want to offend you in any way, Mr. Chatterjee, but it appears that, perhaps, the attitude of Bengal caste-Hindus was : " We are not concerned with this : perhaps it will come to nothing; if it helps to save the Mahatma's life well and good ; if it affects us in any way we can repudiate it afterwards" ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: With great respect that was not so. I had the honour to be on the Provincial Franchise Committee and had the honour to co-operate with the Lothian Committee. We went into careful investigation as to who were the Untouchables. That is the whole point for investigation.

8877. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* You are going away from my point. The reports of what was happening in Bombay and Poona were published regularly fully in the "Liberty" every day. Are you prepared to contradict that?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee : I am sorry to say I never read the "Liberty".

8878. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I brought the "Liberty". I purposely did not bring the "Statesman" because you would say it is an Anglo-Indian paper?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Why should I? I cannot imagine myself saying that.

8879. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I brought it deliberately because I know it is a Hindu paper?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: It is. It comes to my house. I read it occasionally.

8880. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I put it to you that the proceedings of the Malaviya Conference held on the 20th are given on full front page in "Liberty" ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I hear that from you.

8881. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* You can see it for yourself. I will pass it to you ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I accept your word for it.

8882. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* Similarly, what happened on the 21st is published on the front page fully in the issue of the 22nd ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I dare say.

8883. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* So that anybody in Bengal would really know what was happening in Bombay and Poona. I will put to you one more point ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: We thought before any decision of this weighty character could ever become applicable to public bodies in Bengal they would be invited to send their representatives to take part in the deliberations.

8884. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* When the Sub-Committee was propounded there was no protest made against its composition ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: They would have no right to.

8885. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* If you refer to the "Liberty" of the 22nd September 1932, it contains the Report of the proposals I made to this Sub-Committee on the basis of which I was prepared to negotiate. Mr. Jayakar will corroborate me that I did propose certain things on the basis of which I was prepared to negotiate. In my proposals I had demanded 50 seats for the Bengal.

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Depressed Classes you mean ?

8886. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I mean Depressed Classes, and yet there was not a single statement of protest from the Bengal caste-Hindus either to Pandit Malaviya, who was supposed to negotiate the Pact on this basis, nor did you send anybody to Poona although you know I had made this demand which was published, as I say, in a most prominent place in the issue of the 22nd September ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : I am sorry, but I am afraid we did not attach as much importance to Dr. Ambedkar's proposals as we ought to have done.

8887. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I am sorry, you are to suffer for it. I just want to ask you one or two questions about this. The announcement of His Majesty accepting the Poona Pact was made on the 26th September, 1932, in the Central Legislature in both Houses. That announcement by His Majesty's Government was acclaimed by everybody in the Central Legislature ; there was no protest made then by any member either in the Council of State or in the Legislature against the acceptance of this Pact. Is not that so ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee. : That may be so.

Mr. M. R. Jayakar: Bengal is represented in the Central Legislature.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: With reference to an imputation made by Dr. Ambedkar, that when Sir Harry Haig, the Home Member, made an announcement to the Legislative Assembly there was no protest from any member. I wish to draw the attention of the Joint Committee to the fact that it is not in accordance with the practice of the Legislative Assembly when an announcement of a decision by His Majesty's Government is made for any reference on any protest to be addressed by any member of the House.

8888. *Lieut. Colonel Sir H. Gidney:* I was in the House when the statement was made by Sir Harry Haig, and it was met by universal acclamation ?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: I was also there, but there was no acclamation about it

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: There was applause, if you will take a word as it was given.

8889. *Lieut. Colonel Sir H. Gidney:* I meant applause, yes ?

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: Some people might have done it.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The whole statement is given in the Legislative Council proceedings for the 26th September 1932, Volume 5, No. 5, and the statement is concluded there is in brackets "applause". The same statement was made in the Council of State. What I want to put is this, is it not a fact that the following gentlemen represented caste-Hindus in the Legislative Assembly ?—(Naming). Then in the Council of State there are the following :—(Naming them.)

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: My answer is that they did not realise the repercussions of the Pact and they are now unanimous in condemning it.

Mr. Bhai Parmanand: May I explain this point ?

8890. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I do not know that there is any explanation needed. They are members of the Assembly and they did not protest. With regard to the protests in the Bengal Province itself after the Pact in September 1932, there was a session of the Bengal Legislative Council in November, 1932 ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Yes.

8891. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* There was no formal resolution moved in the Council protesting against the application of the Poona Pact to Bengali?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: No.

8892. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I am referring to the Report.

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I must reply to this question. The first thing we did was to get together all the influential Hindu members of the Council within a short time of the Council Meeting, and we decided that we should jointly

8893. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* May I have an answer to my question, and then we can have an explanation. I want to know whether there was

any formal resolution moved in the Bengal Legislative Council in November Session which met immediately after the acceptance of the Poona Pact protesting formally against this. That is what I want to know, was there a resolution ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Undoubtedly, I did put in a resolution protesting against the Poona Pact in the November Session, but I was induced to withdraw it by the joint representations of Mr. Rasik Biswas, a member of the Namsudras, an influential member, and Pandit Malaviya, but both of them assured me that they would get Dr. Ambedkar to hold another meeting and to revise the Poona Pact in view of the facts which are placed before them and they repeatedly requested me not to press it to a division in the Council without giving them this chance.

8894. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* Was it moved ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: They induced me to withdraw it and on the ground.

8895. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* It was not moved ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I withdrew it.

8896. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* It was not moved ?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I say I withdrew it.

8897. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* You had given notice of it?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: I gave notice of it, and, on the representation of Mr. Rasik Biswas and Pandit Malaviya, I withdrew it. I did not move it.

3898. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* In the March Session of 1933, the motion that was discussed was a special motion. The ordinary motion which stood in the name of Mr. Shanti Shekhareswar Ray was not moved ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: It could not be reached.

8899. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* No priority was sought for it ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Priority was sought for it but priority could not be obtained. There was no time to reach it. Subsequently a special resolution was moved by me.

8900. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* A month after that resolution was passed, in the March Session of 1933 in the Bengal Legislative Council, a public meeting was held in Calcutta in the Albert Hall, on the 21st April, 1933. It was presided over by one Mr. Samal, and that meeting passed a resolution condemning the attitude of the Bengal Legislative Council in protesting against the Poona Pact ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Very possibly.

8901. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* The proceedings of that Committee are published in full in the "Liberty" of 22nd April, 1933. Is that a fact, or is not?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee: Very possibly. I do not know myself. I was in England.

8902. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* You said that the Bengal Government at the time the Poona Pact was accepted was somewhere in Darjeeling, and that no Hindu was consulted. You said that in answer to Sir Nripendra Sircar?

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee : Yes.

8903. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Will you tell what was the composition of the Bengal Executive in September, 1932 ? Who were its members, and what was communal composition ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : There were three Bengali Members—no, two Bengali Hindu Members in the Bengal Government.

8904. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Is it your suggestion that the Bengal Government which had two Bengal caste-Hindu members on it did not approve of the Poona Pact ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : I have nothing to suggest about the Government but I am quite sure that both the Hindu members of the Government had disapproved of it, and had emphatically protested against it.

8905. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : With respect to the Central Executive you have said one Bengal Hindu was there, Sir B. L. Mitter. Is that so ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Yes ; I cannot say anything about Sir B. L. Mitter, but I would ask you to refer to the present member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

8906. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : It has been suggested by Sir Nripendra Sircar in the course of his examination that the whole thing was accepted by His Majesty in a sort of emergency created by the fast of Mahatma Gandhi. What I want to put to you is this : Is it not a fact that the first letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to the Government was not dated the 18th August, but was dated the 11th March, 1932 (that letter is addressed to Sir Samuel Hoare) ; it is practically five months before the letter referred to by Sir Nripendra Sircar, and that is what he says. That is before the Communal Decision was given, that is my point. This is his statement : "Dear Sir Samuel, you will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference when the Minorities' claim was presented I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorates to the Depressed Classes. This was not said in the heat of the moment nor by way of any rhetoric. It was meant to be a serious statement", and so on. Then he says "I have therefore respectfully to inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes I must fast unto death." The threat to fast was not given in the letter of the 18th August, after the Communal Decision was given, but was given in the letter of the 11th March, 1932 ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Quite true.

8907. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : And His Majesty's Government gave separate electorate to the Depressed Classes notwithstanding this threat in the letter of the 11th March ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Our complaint against the Pact is that it perpetuates every evil of separate electorates.

8908. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : That is another matter. You had better say that to Mahatma Gandhi ; I cannot discuss it ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : The award of His Majesty's Government is much more acceptable to us than the Poona Pact.

8909. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I will ask you one or two questions about that. Your complaint is that the Poona Pact gives a larger number of seats to the Depressed Classes than were given in His Majesty's Government's Award. I want to draw your attention to the letter of the Prime Minister to Mr. Gandhi dated 8th September, 1932, and this is what he said. "The number of territorial seats allotted to Muslims is naturally conditioned by the fact that it is impossible for them to gain any further territorial seats and that in most Provinces they enjoy weightage in excess of their population ratio." I want to draw your special attention to this. "The number of special seats to be filled from special Depressed Class constituencies will be seen to be small and has been fixed, not to provide a quota numerically appropriate for the representation of the whole of the Depressed Class population, but solely to procure a minimum number of spokesmen for the Depressed Classes in the Legislature who are chosen exclusively by the Depressed Classes. The proportion of their special seats is everywhere much below the population percentage of the Depressed Classes ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Quite so, because it is expected that many of the Depressed Classes, especially in Bengal, will come in through the general constituencies.

8910. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* What I want to draw your attention to is this : In giving the Communal Award and apportioning seats to the Depressed Classes His Majesty's Government and the Prime Minister have definitely admitted that those seats are not in proportion to the population ratio and were much below ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee : Quite true but at the same time, the Prime Minister there distinctly makes it clear that the number allotted to the Depressed Classes is less than their numerical proportion, because he specifically mentions the case of Bengal, because in Bengal many of the Depressed Class members would be sure to come in through general constituencies.

8911. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* He never mentioned anything about Bengal, I can assure you ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Most certainly he has done so ; I have read the award carefully.

8912. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.* With regard to this, there was a session held — the seventh session of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Conference at Malda, somewhere between the 17th and 19th of September, 1932, under the presidency of Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee. Is that so ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Very possibly.

8913. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* In the seventh session of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Conference at Malda ?

Mr. J. Bannerjee: Very possibly. I do not know ; I have no personal knowledge.

9914. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* I want to read to you a resolution that was passed at this Bengal Provincial Hindu Conference, published in "Liberty" of the 19th September, 1932 : "This Conference appeals to the so-called Depressed Classes not to demand representation on the basis of separate electorates in the coming Constitution, and affirms its adherence to the Raja Moonje Pact and its readiness to concede representation to the Depressed Classes according to their population strength through joint electorate even if it means surrender to them of the majority of seats allotted to the Hindus ?

Dr. Moonje: May I reply to that question ? The resolution was passed. We stick to it, and my friend Mr. Chatterjee had made a sporting offer to Dr. Ambedkar. Is he prepared to see what his number would be according to the population basis, the Depressed Classes being defined as untouchables and unapproachables ? We are prepared to make this sporting offer to Dr. Ambedkar, and let the whole question be decided in Bengal and the Punjab as to what is the number of the Depressed Classes according to the definition that the Depressed Classes member is one who is untouchable or unapproachable. We make the sporting offer.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not want to make the fate of my people the sport of party politics and I am afraid I cannot accept that offer.

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†9269. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* May I put a supplementary question ? Do I understand that you include the depressed classes also in your Hindu Mahasabha ? Do you claim to represent them ?

Dr. Moonje: My contention is that I represent also the depressed classes and my friend, Mr. Gavai, who is sitting by my side, is a representative of the Depressed Classes on the deputation of Hindu Mahasabha and it has never been proved whether I represent the majority or whether Mr. Gavai represents the majority among the Depressed Classes.

9270. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* That is a different matter. I want to know, do you represent the depressed classes ?

Dr. Moonje: I represent the majority portion of the depressed classes also.

9271. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:* As far as I am concerned I absolutely disagree with that position. What does Mr. Gavai have to say ? I still repeat the fact that the Depressed Classes do not belong to the organisation that Dr. Moonje represents so far as his memorandum is concerned. I know as a matter of fact that the Hindus of the Punjab have repudiated it ?

Dr. Moonje: What?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That part of your memorandum No. 57 has been repudiated by the depressed classes of the Punjab.

†Minutes of Evidence, Vol. 11-C, 31st July 1933, p. 1466.

(14)

**Mr. M. K. Acharya, Mr. L. M. Deshpande, and Mr. J. L. Bannerjee,
on behalf of the All-India Varnashram Swarajya Sangha**

*10,753. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: Mr. Acharya, do I understand you correctly, when I say that what you want is that the Legislature should not have competence to pass laws affecting what you call the fundamentals of religion ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: Yes.

10,754; *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: And that before any such law is introduced you want a sort of previous sanction obtained from heads of religious institutions ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: Yes.

10,755. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: And, thirdly, that after it is introduced it should not become law until it is passed by a two-thirds majority ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: Yes.

10,756. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I want to ask you this : This two-thirds majority is to be two-thirds majority of the Hindu members of the Legislature or two-thirds majority of the total Legislature ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: Of each community sought to be affected. If it is only the Hindu community it would be only the Hindu members. If it is the Muslim community there would be the Muslim members also.

10,757. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: Are you able to tell us in a defined form what you regard to be the fundamentals of your religion so that it may be possible for this Committee to know to what extent the Legislature can interfere and to what extent it cannot ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: I am willing to give a very humble lecture on the fundamentals of religion if the Committee will hear me for three hours.

10,758. *Sir Austen Chamberlain*: You could not give us a formula that we could get into a reasonable number of words for the section of the Act?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: That is what I said. Dr. Ambedkar is now trying to heckle me into some kind of answer in three words. I cannot.

10,759. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: I am not trying to heckle you ; I am trying to understand. For legislative purposes you must give the Committee some formula which could be put into the Act so that it would be possible, both for the Speaker of the House or the Governor, or whoever may be the deciding authority, and the Courts, to find out exactly whether a particular law passed by the Legislature is *ultra vires* of that Legislature ?

Mr. M. K. Acharya: I have suggested, I thought, a formula which is very workable and which I have in fact taken from some —

10,760. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*: You merely said they are fundamentals. You leave the whole matter undecided. What are the fundamentals ?

*Minutes of Evidence, Vol. II-C, 2nd August 1933, pp. 1605-08.